

## MANASWINI RAO

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### Doctoral Studies

University of California, Berkeley  
 PhD, Agricultural and Resource Economics, Expected completion May 2020  
 DISSERTATION: "Court Productivity and Firms: Evidence from District Courts in India"

PRIMARY FIELDS: Development Economics  
 SECONDARY FIELDS: Political Economics, Applied Econometrics

Professor Aprajit Mahajan  
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 Department of Agricultural  
 & Resource Economics

Professor Elisabeth Sadoulet  
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### Placement Officers

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Diana Lazo  
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### Prior Education

<b>University of California Berkeley</b>	Master of Public Policy	2010
<b>B.M.S College of Engineering (V.T.U), India</b>	B.Engg. (Comp Sc. and Comp. Engg.)	2004

### Grants, Fellowships, and Awards

2018	IRLE Graduate Student Award (w/ Vaishnavi Surendra) (\$6000)
2017	ATAI Grant (w/ Xavier Gine, Aprajit Mahajan, Anup Malani) (\$233,565)
2017	IGC Grant for Judicial Efficiency and Economic Outcomes (Aprajit Mahajan (PI)) (£50,000)
2015	Levin Family Fellowship (w/ Fiona Burlig and Louis Preonas) (\$ 50,000)
2015	Maharaj Kaul Research Travel Grant (\$ 1000)
2014	Post Primary Education Initiative Exploratory Grant (w/ Bastien Michel and Bhavya Srinivasan) (\$ 10000)
2013	USAID DIV Award Pilot Stage, (w/ Emily Breza, Arun Chandrasekhar, and Ashish Shenoy) (\$ 99,632)
2009-2010	Berkeley International Office Fellowship
2009	Jacob K. Javits Summer Fellowship

### Teaching

<b>UC Berkeley</b>	Dept. ARE and Public Policy (joint), <i>International Economic Development (Master)</i> Alain de Janvry and Bruce Wydick	2017
<b>UC Berkeley</b>	Dept. ARE and Economics (joint), <i>Economic Development (Undergraduate)</i> Aprajit Mahajan	2016
<b>UC Berkeley</b>	Dept. Economics, <i>Intermediate Macroeconomic Analysis (Undergraduate)</i> Steven Wood	2010
<b>UC Berkeley</b>	Dept. Economics, <i>20th Century Economic History (Undergraduate)</i> Brad DeLong	2009

## Research Papers

### **“Court Productivity and Firms: Evidence from District Court in India” (JOB MARKET PAPER)**

Abstract. This paper provides the first causal evidence of court productivity on firm production using novel data comprising of 6 million case records across 195 court districts in India over 9 years along two margins. First, I show that court productivity, measured as the rate of case resolution as a percentage of annual caseload, has an “institutional” effect on the overall business environment by reducing transaction cost frictions. Second, courts also have direct effects on firms engaged in litigation through the length of the litigation process itself, or what I term as the “opportunity” cost effect. For demonstrating the first set of effects as causal, I exploit plausible exogenous variation in judge occupancy, arising out of a system of rotating transfers of judges and increasing vacancy, to instrument for endogenous court productivity. To demonstrate the direct effects, I make use of deterministic rules that define the jurisdiction of a case, showing that they are orthogonal to the firms outcomes prior to case filing. Finally, I provide suggestive evidence showing that court productivity enhances the effectiveness of legal reforms. In other words, the effects of any welfare enhancing policy or legislative reforms are limited by low court productivity. Therefore, policy solutions centered around legislative changes to promote economic development should also focus on improving court productivity.

## Research in Progress

### **“Mission Kakatiya: Impact Evaluation of Minor Irrigation Tank Rehabilitation in Telangana”** with Xavier Gine, Aprajit Mahajan, Anup Malani

*Pre-analysis plan filed with the AEA RCT Registry (#AEARCTR-0001821).*

Abstract. We evaluate the effects of rehabilitating local village level irrigation tanks on agricultural outcomes using a combination of observational and experimental approaches. Tank irrigation is a common (and climate friendly) mode of irrigation in Southern and Western India, which is based on impounding the surface run-off during rainy season for later use. However, since these are common pool resources, a lack of periodic upkeep had led to excessive silting and therefore, lowered capacity. Mission Kakatiya is a state-wide program in Telangana that aims to rehabilitate over 45000 tanks across the state in multiple phases. We make use of the staggered roll-out of earlier phases to study the impacts and understand the context of implementation in a differences-in-difference framework using a sample of 750 tanks. Further, we validate the findings using an experimental approach where we randomize the order of rehabilitation on a set of 92 tanks.

### **“The Power of Agency: Evidence from India”** with Xavier Gine, Aprajit Mahajan, Anup Malani

*Pre-analysis plan filed with the AEA RCT Registry (#AEARCTR-0004336).*

Abstract. Community-driven development (CDD) emphasizes a “bottom-up” approach focusing on community control over planning and implementation decisions to improve development outcomes. We propose to assess the value of community participation in choosing the location and implementation of local infrastructure projects by comparing a participatory “bottom-up” approach to the standard “top-down” planning and implementation where the community only plays a limited role. The context for the study is the construction of minor irrigation channels in the command area of small irrigation tanks in Telangana. The government has recently launched a program to rehabilitate the storage capacity of the tanks but has left the distribution of water from the tank to plots in the command area to the farmers. The research project thus varies the extent of community involvement over the choice and implementation of field channels and assesses its impact on irrigation resource allocation, agricultural outcomes, and continued maintenance.

### **“Gender Wage Gap in Agricultural Labor Markets in Rural India”** with Vaishnavi Surendra

Abstract. We explore the determinants of gender wage gap in the agricultural labor markets in India and examine the role of social norms in perpetuating it. We use multiple approaches to address these questions including analyzing secondary data from ICRISAT VDSA Panel, collecting primary data via surveys to elicit expectations and behavioral parameters to complement the former data source, and finally in a related project, investigate the role gender norms in influencing such behavior perpetuating the wage gap and other labor market outcomes through a lab-in-field experiment.

<b>Prior Employment</b>	<b>UC Berkeley</b> , Graduate Student Researcher (Profs Aprajit Mahajan, Alain de Janvry, Elisabeth Sadoulet, Supreet Kaur)	2014 - Present
	<b>The World Bank</b> , Consultant	2018
	<b>J-PAL South Asia</b> , Senior Research Manager (position at the time of exit)	2010 - 2014
	<b>The Asian Development Bank</b> , Consultant	2009-10
	<b>Janaagraha</b> , Associate	2006-08
	<b>Infosys Ltd</b> , Software Engineer	2004
<b>Talks</b>	2018, 2017 UC Berkeley Development Lunch Series	
	2017 J-PAL South Asia Annual Staff Meet	
	2014 Dept. of Agriculture, Government of Tamil Nadu, India	
	2013 Impact Evaluation of Population, Health and Nutrition Programs, PHFI, New Delhi, India	
<b>Activities</b>	2015 - 2019 Leadership Board, <a href="#">Women in Economics at Berkeley</a>	
	2018 - 2019 ARE PhD Admissions Committee Student Member	
	2015 - 2016 Organizer, Dept. Coffee Hour	
<b>Languages</b>	English (proficient), Hindi (proficient), Kannada (native), Tamil	
<b>Skills</b>	R (proficient), Stata (proficient), Python (Intermediate), C++, Java	